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Cuba

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OAS Debaters to Slap Castro With Feather

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WASHINGTON, July 20—

The stage is set here for another hemispheric "showdown" in the Organization of American States on the nagging and divisive problem of what to do about Fidel Castro's Communist Cuba.

For the fourth time in five years the Castro regime will be on the OAS debating carpet when the foreign ministers convene tomorrow.

No Real Damage

The long-delayed meeting, stemming from Venezuelan

charges eight months ago that Cuba in the Western Hemisphere, a thrice-weekly service by Cubana Airlines between Havana and Mexico City.

Serve Notice

In fact, even though an OAS investigating committee has found Cuba guilty of sending weapons, saboteurs, money, and propaganda into Venezuela in an effort to topple a constitutionally elected government, so-called punishment resolutions to be voted on this week have been watered down so they amount to little more than a wrist-slapping.

Venezuela has been demanding that the ministers vote for a diplomatic break and a halt in trade.

Any dissent or reluctance to take hard-line action, Venezuela has argued, would tend to indicate that the OAS is impotent to deal with Communist subversion from Cuba.

1. Binding Proposal

Nevertheless, only one of the proposals to be considered this week would be binding on all 20 nations in the OAS. It would invoke a shipping and trade embargo on the island.

It is believed this sanction will muster only the necessary two-thirds majority vote (13).

The ministers are expected only to "recommend" a break in diplomatic relations and a halt in air travel, thus leaving it to the discretion of OAS members to act.

Only Mexico, Chile, Uruguay and Bolivia still maintain diplomatic ties with Havana. Mexico has the only air link to

Mexico, Chile and Uruguay already have served notice they will oppose any hemispheric sanctions against Cuba. Bolivia likely will express its opposition by abstaining in the voting.

To underscore its disdain for the conference, Mexico also announced it wasn't even planning to send its foreign minister, only its OAS ambassador, Vicente Sanchez Gavito.

Perhaps the most constructive measure to emerge from the ministerial bickering will be a proposal to brand as open aggression Communist subversion in Latin America.

Sponsoring diplomats reason that a specific interpretation of subversion as a form of armed aggression would put some needed teeth in the Rio Treaty of reciprocal assistance, which now provides for collective defensive action only in the case of an armed attack against a member state.

Arms Shipments

Since Communist subversion in Latin America has taken the form of clandestine arms shipments—as in the case of Venezuela—and infiltration for

guerrilla warfare, the proposal might make life tougher for Castro.

Special significance is attached to the proposal in view of last week's blistering report by the OAS security committee, which declared Communist subversion emanating largely from Cuba is showing no letup in Latin America.

Nonetheless, this week's conference won't contribute much toward seriously curtailing Castro's exportation of revolution and subversion.